DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 258 151 CS 008 060

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TITLE Postsecondary Reading and Study Skills Laboratories: Variations and Similarities.
PUB DATE Jun 85
NOTE 38p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Learning Laboratories; Postsecondary Education; *Reading Centers; *Reading Skills; Resource Materials; *Study Skills

ABSTRACT

In this report about reading and study skills laboratories in colleges and universities, the importance of considering the differing needs of each institution and knowing what has been successful in different situations is stressed. The report presents descriptions of five developmental skills laboratories, representing an urban community college, a non-secular university, a state university, a city university with open enrollment, and a predominantly black university. Following a review of the literature, the report contains a description of each facility, with an overview and information on materials in general, and print materials in particular. It also lists recommended components of a study skills laboratory. The appendixes contain a list of laboratory resources, a textbook bibliography for a laboratory, and a brief bibliography of professional test guides. (EL)

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Postsecondary Reading and Study Skills Laboratories: Variations and Similarities

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June 1985

CS008060

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Introduction

A reading and study skills laboratory is a vital part of most postsecondary developmental education programs. Most two and four year colleges and universities which offer courses for the underprepared student have labs which are equipped with relevant books and non-print material which usually includes a variety of learning technology. Even though most programs have labs, there is no standard reading and study skills laboratory. Each institution has different needs because each caters to a different population. There is very little literature on the subject of such facilities.

Individuality is important in creating such a facility; however, it is also important to know what has been successful in different situations. There is something to learn from the designer of the lab at a state university, a community college, a city university with open enrollment, a predominantly Black university, and a non-secular university. For this reason, this report includes a review of the literature, a perspective on labs focusing on the way they are set up and their print and non-print materials, and general recommendations based on what most facilities appear to have in common.

Chapter 1

Review of the Literature

The underprepared or non-traditional student exists on a large majority of campuses across the United States, and programs accommodating these students are prolific. It is estimated that 76% of the four-year institutions offer developmental programs and 95% of the community colleges offer them as well (Rouche and Snow, 1978). Eight million students are enrolled in colleges and universities in this country and approximately 15% are attending developmental courses or partaking of a developmental service (Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, 1980). Recent research on these programs indicates that 1) students improve their grade point average after participating in developmental studies, 2) they make higher grades than predicted by admissions criteria such as SAT scores or high school grades, 3) their retention rate is better than the rate for similar caliber students who do not participate (Boylan, 1983). Donovan (1975) found statistically significant differences in gain scores in a study he conducted using subjects in experimental and control groups taking remedial English, mathematics, and science

courses.

Researchers have proven the efficacy of such programs on the college campus, yet the kind of program offered as developmental or remedial varies greatly from institution to institution. Each is individualized and tailored to a specific student population and each considers specific kinds of material either essential or dispensable, considering the budgetary constraints on the program.

The common element to all is the reading and study skills laboratory housing much of the material used for helping the non-traditional student to acquire the skills necessary to perform well in college. Sharma (1977) reviews programs and reports the lab to be at the very heart of instruction, an essential component for students with language deficits. She lists her objectives for the program under the laboratory sections. Her objectives are "1) to assist the efforts of these students in gaining academic success by furnishing the skills of reading and studying and 2) to establish the vehicle to which reading and study skills are easily and advantageously aligned." (p.51) Sharma literally sees the lab and the program as one and the same. The lab becomes the embodiment of the program.

These investigators are particularly interested in the books the research noted as essential to such labs and reviewed the literature on print materials in reading and

study skills laboratories in postsecondary institutions. There is a dearth of information on this specific topic, except that which is provided by publishers attempting to sell books. Some print materials are included in reports of programs, guidelines on setting up such programs, and experimental studies comparing different approaches to teaching mature students who have not mastered the basic skills. Some reports make substantive suggestions, but do not include reference lists supporting them. For instance, Crawford (1983), at Niagara University in New York, responds to a long-term evaluation project by suggesting a number of changes. Among suggested improvements is the one that texts for freshmen should be selected on the basis of readability and housed in the lab.

There are reports written as early as 1965, twenty years ago, but none was found written before this date. At this time Cutts (1965) shows developmental education in a primitive state and offers little more than a perspective on the subject. He recommends that a reading center have an abundance of materials in many varieties on all instructional levels and that these materials be indexed for quick availability. This point is extremely important; however, Cutts does not expand on the categories of print materials or, specifically, the titles of books. The major portion of his report is a verbal and physical blueprint of what a lab should look like. The article is innovative for its time, but much

has changed since then.

A more recent overview of what a program should contain is provided in a sourcebook published by the Department of Education in cooperation with the Cornell Institute (1976). Along with reading and study skills is a vocational-personal decision-making component with materials suggested for its implementation. Outlined and discussed for each area are desired student outcomes, standards of success, unique strategies and approaches, measurement tools, recommended materials, and modes of instruction. The Institute includes long lists of materials related to each area (Appendix A), and recommends more specific materials considered essential for each course.

Study Skills

- How to Study in College (Paul)
- Effective Study (Robinson)
- How to Survive in College (with cassettes)
- Listen and Read -- EDL Program (with cassettes)

Reading

- Jamestown Publishers - topics from Black Voices from the Bottom
- Bantam Series (high interest paperbacks)

- SR. Reading for Understanding
- SRA Reading Lab
- PROBE: Workbook and Cassettes
- How to Read Factual Literature (Pauk)
- Be a Better Reader
- Reading Versatility (Adams)
- Six-Way Paragraphs (Pauk)
- McGraw-Hill Basic Skills
- **Vocational-Personal/Decision-Making**
- CEEB Decision Making Materials (Decision/Outcomes; Deciding)
- What Color is Your Parachute? (Bolles)
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- How to Decide: A Guide for Women. If You Don't Know Where You're Going, You'll Probably End Up Somewhere Else
- Career Exploration Kit - SRA
- You Pack Your Own Chute (Film)
- Values Clarification, Success Analysis, Hard Choices:

Strategies for Decision Making

- Values Auction

Blattner and others (1984) provide a guide which includes, among other things, reference books used in a research-verified training program to help high-risk students complete postsecondary education programs. The reading class is reinforced with lab materials such as textbooks, reading speed improvement material, and general comprehension improvement exercises. For study skills reinforcement, the lab holds materials containing exercises on listening and notetaking, test-taking skills, outlining, memory and concentration, and time management. The recommended materials follow:

- **Study Skills**

- You Can Learn to Learn (Christ and Adams)

- How to Study in College (Pauk)

- Basic Skills System (Wagner)

- College Study Skills (Shephard)

- **Reading**

- Reading for Results (Fleming and Mansbach)

- Developing Reading Skills for Business and Industry

(Santeusanio)

- Breaking Through (Smith)

Heerman (1983) conducted an experimental study comparing the effects of two different comprehension treatments on the reading of college students participating in a laboratory class of developmental reading. He wanted to find out which approach would have a greater effect on reading achievement, critical thinking ability, and reading attitudes. One group used kits emphasizing inferencing skills: Reading for Understanding Program, kits 2 and 3, (Thurstone, 1978). Students read paragraphs and drew conclusions which were not explicitly stated. The other group used the Jamestown Comprehension Skill Series (Williston, 1974) which breaks reading down into nine subskills and places them in a hierarchy. After twelve weeks of treatment and posttesting, it was concluded that both commercial materials were equally effective in improving reading comprehension and related skills.

There is some similarity in titles of books used in labs supporting reading and/or study skills classes; some of the variety is introduced, as with the Cornell report (1976), when other skills, professions, counseling, or content areas are included as developmental areas. Although not all labs and programs accommodate this broad view of the field, it is not unusual. Baker (1980-1) sees the assistance center as a place

which recognizes that affective and cognitive problems are often integrated. Affective blocks to skill development have to be identified, acknowledged, and worked with so that a person's potential can be released. Baker's argument is substantiated in psychological theory of reading (Downing and Leong, 1982).

The reading and study skills laboratory is continuously viewed by professionals in the field as a major focal point of the learning assistance center. The clientele's opinions of the lab depend largely on the materials held therein. There is not a lot of information in the literature on what kinds of materials are proven successful in such programs, yet what is there may be helpful. The fact that there is no standard list of lab materials may indicate that there is no standard for developmental programs. Each college or university determines which students need assistance within its own individual academic environment and creates an appropriate program. For that reason these researchers choose to extend their investigation to college labs in area schools. The summaries of the visitations are necessary additions to the review of the literature.

Chapter 2

An Account of Reading and Study Skills Laboratories

These investigators visited five developmental skills laboratories in colleges and universities. What follows is a description of each facility with an overview, information on the set-up, materials in general, and the print materials in particular. The schools were chosen because each is unique in some way, and each caters to a somewhat different population, so each offered some variety in painting a total picture of the kinds of reading and study skills labs which are in operation. Represented in the list is a state university, a community college, a city university with open enrollment, a non-secular school, and a predominantly Black university. Each will be discussed separately. The names of the schools and references which would identify them have been omitted because there is often a stigma attached to institutions needing such programs, despite the fact that they are extremely common.

An Urban Community College

Overview

This urban community college has a learning resource center with a fine national reputation, particularly for its work with literacy and basic skills. The center houses the campus library and a management unit, and the entire campus and community is served by the center which focuses on the use of instructional technology accommodating all disciplines and a variety of learning styles. It is also a testing center which the faculty use for basic skills and content area work. (LaVerne, 1981) The resource center is a major focal point of the campus, both achitecturally and academically.

The purpose of the larger program, of which the lab is a part is to encourage instructional development and to provide support in the academic program through the use of technology, a centralized learning laboratory, a testing center, production and delivery services, choices of non-print materials for instructional programs, and related activities.

This community college has a large learning resources lab which offers options to traditional classroom instruction. Materials for seventeen disciplines are included in the center, and students use the facilities on a voluntary and assigned basis. They complete assignments with commercially- or in-house prepared media in the disciplines of English,

reading, study skills, and content courses. They also complete individualized perscriptions given on the basis of learning styles or needs.

Set-Up and Materials in General

Since all students work in the lab at one time or another, there is a large amount of software which includes videotapes, 16mm films, and learning packages called kits - sometimes a tape and text or manual, filmstrip or cassette.

Heavily used are filmstrips and carousel projectors, especially in the field of allied health. Other equipment used are videotapes. Often students are videotaped in a course, and then they critique their class performance in the lab. Much of the viewing occurs in listening/viewing rooms for individuals or small groups who are instructed in operating the equipment themselves. College of the Air TV credit courses are taped, and students may view them.

The types of tests administered here are as follows:

- standardized diagnostic and achievement in reading and writing
- pre and post- criterion referenced
- mastery for individualized courses
- mid-term and final examinations

- make-up
- essay and composition
- interest inventories
- credit by examination
- aptitude and occupational
- mental ability
- placement
- waiving curriculum or course requirements

Print Materials

As mentioned earlier, the resource center focuses on the use of instructional technology. The theory behind this practice considers the fact that these students have been exposed to traditional learning experiences in the past, yet they have performed poorly. If print materials alone are ineffective, then an alternative must be offered. There is no existing list of books available. Also unavailable is a list of materials which uses books in conjunction with media. In general, the print material consists of programmed texts in the basic skills of reading and writing. There are language cards which are magnetic-taped and designed for pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary development. The variety in the software supports a specific student population, namely urban

students of various age levels - often older.

A Non-Secular University

Overview

The reading and study skills laboratory at this university is part of the counseling center. The staff's objectives are to assist students in developing an understanding of themselves, in solving problems, and in improving academic performance. The reading and study skills component then becomes an essential element in meeting these objectives. Skill areas which are considered necessary to academic achievement include reading comprehension, mathematics, study and test-taking strategies, notetaking, rapid reading, and time management. There is a small percentage of students who take advantage of what this component offers, but those who do consider it an important factor in their education.

Set-Up and Materials in General

There are two classrooms, two rooms reserved for the lab, and a conference room allocated to the component in the basement of a university building where the Counseling Center resides. The instructors sometimes leave the building and use other campus facilities to teach workshops and classes. The workshops often take the form of a mini-course in that they are several sessions in length and are taken with no academic

credit. Some of the titles follow:

- GRE and GMAT Preparation
- Computer Literacy
- Speed Reading
- Math Skills I and II
- Study Skills
- Self-Hypnosis and Academic Performance Anxiety
- Lecture/Text Notetaking
- Test-taking

The learning skills specialist makes several recommendations based on how her component operates and what she would like in the ideal situation:

1. A lab should have textbooks from courses in which students are enrolled. An excellent way to teach a reading technique is by using the materials students presently use.
2. Tapes of actual lectures can be used by students in learning how to take notes. The students themselves could tape the lectures they attend.
3. Syllabi of courses in which students are enrolled could

be collected and kept in the lab for reference purposes.

4. The unit on time management should be completed using these syllabi so that students can plan their time according to what they are required to do during the semester.

5. A meeting should be arranged between the reading and study skills faculty and the academic faculty who teach freshmen.

6. There are resources already on campus and these should be used. "Canned" materials like tapes, machines, or even textbooks on the subject of reading and study skills are not as effective as materials students are tested on in their academic life.

7. The students should be asked to bring their notes, syllabi, tests, and texts as soon as possible after the very beginning of the semester.

Print Materials

The lab holds a variety of print materials. The most used by students and instructors are freshmen textbooks (Appendix B). This reflects the philosophy of the supervisor who feels that materials used in actual academic courses are the most appropriate in teaching developmental skills. Other

materials are books preparing graduate students for professional tests (Appendix C): MCAT and LSAT. There are some reading and study skills books which are similar to all such programs and then there are some unusual ones. Two books which these researchers find of particular interest are

- The Extra Edge: Success Strategies for Women by Charlene Mitchell and Thomas Burdick (Washington DC: Acropolis Books, 1983)

- The Art of Thinking: A Guide to Critical and Creative Thought by Vincent Ryan Ruggiero (Cambridge: Harper and Row, 1981)

As was the case with the urban community college, this institution with high admission standards designed a program and lab facilities appropriate to its student population.

A State University

Overview

The lab at this state university is connected to the counseling center and located in the same building. It offers courses for credit in reading and study skills, workshops, and tutoring to freshmen in particulary and also to the general student population. There is special emphasis placed on helping foreign students and older students rentering academic life. Its full-time and part-time staff is committed to

tapping the potential of these students and to helping them succeed in college.

Set-Up and Materials in General

The lab is located on the second floor of a small building and holds books, tapes and programmed texts, and audio-visual equipment. There is an extensive selection of cassette-tape programs for English as a second language instruction. Students enrolled or electing to participate in the program fill out a student inventory card asking for demographic information, a self-assessment of skills, courses enrolled in at the present time, and the reasons for coming to the lab. Students are tested, and assignments are prescribed appropriate to their specific needs. Assistance is offered on tape, individually, and in groups (workshops, courses, mini-courses) in the following areas:

- English as a second language
- examination anxiety
- examination skills - essay and multiple choice
- grammar and mechanics in English
- listening and notetaking
- math anxiety
- precollege skills development

- reading rate and comprehension
- spelling
- stress management
- term paper preparation
- textbook skills
- time management and avoiding procrastination
- vocabulary
- writing skills

Print Materials

A catalogue of print materials does not exist; however, it is apparent that the facility houses many popular reading and study skills texts by Pauk, Langan, McWhorter, Brown, and Gilbert which students use on a daily basis. Students make more use of the audio-visual equipment.

A City University with an Open Admissions Policy

Overview

This urban four-year university has an open admissions-policy, and so it has a comprehensive instructional support center which takes on a different purpose than others described in this chapter. The center is part of college

within the university which is the entry-level for students with thirty credits or less of college work. After meeting the requirements of the college, students then transfer to their area of concentration -- their major area of study. Reading and study skills are among the requirements for transfer.

Set-Up and Materials in General

A spacious floor of a large building is given over to the instructional support center and two rooms to the reading and study skills lab. The lab holds programmed texts, filmstrips, and cassettes in an effort to stimulate the underprepared student in alternative ways. The part-time and full-time staff provide tutoring services supplemental to regular classroom instruction wherein the students are taught reading and study skills in conjunction with their regular classroom work. Testing is also accomplished in the facility.

Print Material

The books used in the lab are catalogued, and a description of each is given in a table format. The titles follow.

- Reading for Significant Facts
- How to Read and Study for Success in College
- Successful Reading: Key to our Dynamic Society

- Reading Series: The Art of Getting the Message
- Speed Reading
- Reading Comprehension: Stating the Facts
- Voices from the Bottom
- Reading
- Skim Scan Ensemble
- Programmed Reading for Adults
- The Way to Reading Improvement
- Selections from the Black
- Communication: A Guide to Composition and Reading
- The Mature Student's Guide to Reading and Comprehension
- Basic Skills Learning System: Reading
- The Need to Read
- Reading Around Words
- Contemporary Building Basic Skills in Reading, Book 2
- Reading to Understand Science

A Predominantly Black University

Overview

The reading and study skills lab is part of an academic support center housed on a floor of one of the campus buildings. The faculty offices are located partially in the same building and partially in other locations. The main objective of the lab is to provide reinforcement to the skills and concepts presented in verbal and study skills classes. In fulfilling this goal it provides a quiet, relaxed setting for concentrated learning and studying and offers small group tutoring in specific problem areas of reading and writing. It is the place where instruction is individualized through intensive one-to-one tutoring, prescriptive modules, and computer-assisted instruction modules. The lab supervisor, student workers, and faculty provide monitoring for reading, spelling and composition quizzes and examinations.

Set-Up and Materials in General

There is a variety of instructional materials -- workbooks, texts, reference works, instructor-produced handouts, and media materials. Also available is an assortment of commercially prepared media resources -- audio cassettes, videocassettes, filmstrips, and transparencies. A majority of the clientele works on the computers.

The philosophy of the supervisor is that there should be

a wide variety of material available to accommodate students of different ability levels, interests, and learning styles. Hence, there is a mixture of print and non-print media.

Print Materials

The textbook used by the students in this program is unique in that it is a handbook containing all three disciplines -- study skills, English, and mathematics. Often, students deficient in one basic skill area are dificient in others, and the book was chosen because of the combination of skills:

- Comprehensive Handbook for Study Skills, English, and Mathematics. Edited by Janet R. Moore and others. (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1984)

Other major print materials are reading and study skills textbooks. A survey taken a few years ago established the ten most used books:

- Best Methods of Study
- Better Grades in College with Less Effort
- Effective Study
- How to Become a Successful Student
- How to Study in College

- Improving College Study Skills

- Making the Most of College

- Study and Succeed

- Studying a Textbook

- Systems for Study

In addition to the standard developmental studies texts, there are a number of speed reading books, comprehension exercise books, and leisure reading novels. The supervisor says that an ideal situation is one in which these types of materials are constantly updated and that daily newspapers and current subscriptions are purchased to magazines such as Time, Essence, Sports Illustrated, and U.S. News and World Report. She suggests that the lab hold the latest books which prepare students for professional tests in the fields of law, medicine, nursing, business, dentistry, and the allied health sciences, and that it have a collection of freshmen textbooks.

Chapter 3

Recommendations

Based on the information gleaned from the literature review and the visitations to reading and study skills laboratories in five postsecondary institutions, these researchers recommend the following as important components of any such facility:

1. mandatory laboratory hours
2. computer programs on the subject matter taught in the program
3. a library of sample tests in content area subjects
4. textbooks from freshmen courses
5. subscriptions to news magazines expressing a variety of political opinions
6. popular fiction and non-fiction books
7. lectures taped from classes in the regular academic curriculum

8. a list of lab holdings which includes readability levels, notes, and available audio-visual equipment

9. books and videotapes (if available) preparing students for professional tests such as the MCAT, GRE, LSAT

10. syllabi of courses in which the student clientele are enrolled

11. samples of student notes in a variety of subjects

12. the standard reading and study skills textbooks listed in chapters 1 and 2 and in appendix A.

Summary

While each of the five laboratories has similar students, each is set up differently. The set-up includes available materials and the physical lay-out of the lab itself. Also different is the degree to which the institution requires students to use the facility. Entering with a basic degree of deficiency in the content areas, most of the clientele of the labs need improvement in a variety of skills. Most of the lab supervisors agree that since students have not been successful with print media alone, alternative learning experiences should be offered. Finally there are basic texts and media that the labs use. These investigators have taken into consideration these differences and similarities in making the above recommnedations.

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Thurstone, T. M. Reading for Understanding 2 & 3: Teacher's

Appendix A

LAB RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

Reading Program Component

- Increased Reading Efficiency and Maintaining Reading Efficiency (Miller)
- Efficient Reading (Brown)
- Toward Reading Comprehension, Book Z (Sherbourne)
- How to Survive in College
- Instructional/Communications Technology
- Readings for Understanding (Thurston)
- Wordcraft 3 Command
- PAR
- Vocabulary for College Students
- Structural Approach to Reading Improvement
- Vocabulary: English Vocabulary Cards

Study Skills Component

- Comprehensive Handbook for Study Skills, English, and Mathematics (Moore, ed.)
- Academic Skills Program (Quest, Cohen, King, et. al)
- Studying Effectively (Gilbert, Wren)
- Joffee materials (Wadsworth Publications)
- College Skills Program (Sack-Yourman)
- Basic Skill Program (McGraw Hill)
- Systems for Study (McGraw Hill)
- How to Read and Study for Success in College (Holt, Rinehart)
- How to Take Tests (Milman and Pauk)

- How to Write Themes and Termpapers (Ellis)
- Developing Reading Efficiency (Hess)
- Writing the Research Term Paper (Rouser and Gray)
- The Reading Line - Social Studies (Reiter)
- Student's Guide to Effective Study (Brown)
- How to Study (Morgan and Reese)
- Best Methods of Study (Smith)
- Learning to Learn (Smith, et al.)
- Study Skills Cassettes and Filmstrips (New York Times)

Vocational-Personal Decision-Making Program Component

- Simon, Monstakes, Rogers, Maslow
- How to Decide: A Guide for Women. If You Don't Know Where You're Going, You'll Probably End Up Somewhere Else.
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Directory of Occupational Titles - Volume I and Volume II
- Career Exploration Kit - SRA
- What Color Is Your Parachute?
- Achievement Motivation, Goal Setting, Self-Analysis, Environmental Search Materials
- You Pack Your Own Chute (Film)
- Values Clarification - Success Analysis
- Hard Choices: Strategies for Decision-Making
- Values Auction

Appendix B

TEXTBOOK BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR A LAB

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Subject: Freshman Textbooks

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Appendix C

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